1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

and its cultivation has spread among all lowland Gonds, who expect to pay their land revenue out of its proceeds.

Lastly there are the permanent rice lands, for wet cultivation. There are wide areas of permanently embanked and irrigated rice fields (*weda*), the use of which the Bison-horn Marias have learnt from their Hindu neighbours; more typical of them are the embankments of little hill-side watercourses into a series of descending little fields, which they call *jhorki weda*. The only fields which they consider can really be cultivated year after year, without resting fallow or the refreshment of wood ash or cow-dung ash, are the fields with good deep black soil; but too frequently the Maria has been elbowed out of such lands by the Hindu lessee of his village, or by Halba settlers. The other rice lands the Bison-horn Maria believes to become exhausted or 'develop sand' after two or three years' cultivation, and he then leaves them fallow for four or five years or more till they are covered with a thick growth of grasses and weeds, especially a grass he calls *chimmia*. The grass, although not burnt like forest in *erka* and *penda*, is looked upon by him in much the same way as a fertilizing agent to be ploughed into the soil; and so in a considerable degree even the cultivation of his *weda* rice fields must be regarded as shifting.

He ploughs these fallow lands up during the rains, unless, owing to their position, they are too wet to be ploughed till the end of the rains, and he repairs the embankments so that each field may retain ample water to rot the grass and weeds. At the end of the rains he gives them a second and more thorough ploughing, and leaves them alone all through the dry season. Just before the monsoon bursts he broadcasts rice seed, and then, when it has sprouted and there is adequate water in the fields, he follows the Chhattisgarhi practice of *biasi*; that is to say, he puddles up the field, young plants and all, by working all over it a flat log, on which he stands, yoked to a pair of oxen. When the land has been ploughed both before and at the end of the rains, the system is called *kohana*; where only the ploughing at the end of the rains has been possible, it is called *karhatti*. The second system is, of course, applied to all fields that have borne a crop just before being ploughed.

If it rains heavily before *kohana* and *karhatti* lands prepared in this way can be sown broadcast, they resort to the '*lai*' system. The seed is soaked in cold water and placed in baskets lined with the sacred *saja* leaves, filled with thick liquid cow manure, and covered over with *palas* (*Butea frondosa*) leaves; it is left thus for three or four days to sprout. The sprouted seed is washed out of the cow-dung with warm water, and is then sown broadcast. A